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COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION

Listening Session Report

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Submitted by
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Executive Summary

As a follow-up to the President's Conference on Cooperative Conservation held in St. Louis in August 2005, the federal government hosted 25 Cooperative Conservation public Listening Sessions across the United States between August 9 and October 9, 2006. Sessions were hosted by the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, and Interior; Environmental Protection Agency; and White House Council on Environmental Quality. Public participants attending were able to provide their comments directly to high-ranking officials representing one or more of the five host agencies. Citizens also were able to submit comments via mail, fax, or email. Regardless of the manner in which they were delivered, all comments were compiled and analyzed with equal importance.

To help focus public input, the Cooperative Conservation public Listening Sessions were designed to ask Americans to share their ideas about the following five questions:

1. How can the federal government enhance wildlife habitat, species protection, and other conservation outcomes through regulatory and voluntary conservation programs?
2. How can the federal government enhance cooperation among federal agencies and with states, tribes, and local communities in the application of environmental protection and conservation laws?
3. How can the federal government work with states, tribes, and other public- and private-sector partners to improve science used in environmental protection and conservation?
4. How can the federal government work cooperatively with businesses and landowners to protect the environment and promote conservation?
5. How can the federal government better respect the interests of people with ownership in land, water, and other natural resources?

Public input was offered at many scales or ranges; for example, from individuals speaking for themselves about very specific issues; to elected officers of non-government organizations commenting on behalf of their large memberships about national or state legislation; to individual business owners or representatives of business associations commenting about local, regional, or national concerns; to government and tribal officials at all electoral levels speaking on behalf of their constituents about a wide range of issues, policies, and regulations.

The open-ended "Listening Session" methodology honors the diversity of opinion in the United States, predictably eliciting a full range of public pro/con opinion and experience; versus a "voting booth" or forced-choice polling approach that, by necessity, reduces variability in citizen input to arrive at majority or plurality decision—and thus, "winners and losers."

Yet, the thousands of Listening Session comments required some form of systematic analysis to facilitate compilation, interpretation, and understanding, and because of the different forms of submission (verbal, electronic and hard copy (written)), different methods were employed to conduct the analysis.

Basically, thematic analysis and key-word analysis were used to categorize Listening Session comments. Session transcripts and written comments were reviewed for common themes. Additionally, Atlas.ti[®] software was used to search all electronic files (transcripts and e-mailed submissions) for (a) thematic similarities and (b) 250 selected keywords of special interest to the federal agencies that participated in the Listening Sessions.

Major categories that emerged for analysis and characterization included:

- Climate Change
- Cooperative Conservation
- Corporate Responsibility
- Drilling in Arctic NWR/Alaska (and other)
- Environmental Laws (General)
 - Clean Water Act (CWA)
 - Endangered Species Act (ESA)
 - National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Everglades Restoration Project
- Farm Bill
- Forestry Issues
- Funding
- Leadership/Staffing
- Native American/Tribal Issues
- Oil and Gas Drilling/Mining (General)
- Private Lands
- Public Lands
- Technology
- Urban Sprawl/Development
- Miscellaneous - National
- Answers to 5 Cooperative Conservation Questions
- Regional and State Issues

Predictably, opinions expressed within each of these categories were diverse and passionate; detailed analysis of foregoing topics is offered in the body of this report.

But of the many scales of issues and ranges of opinions that emerged in the Listening Sessions, perhaps the most telling of all was the range of opinions that participants expressed toward “Cooperative Conservation” as a problem-solving model. These opinions became obvious during the course of thousands of comments, and ranged from embracing, to guarded but hopeful, to skeptical, to opposed.

These thousands of opinions identified general characteristics of “Cooperative Conservation” that would help the citizenry and the federal government (as the public servant of the citizenry) reach mutually beneficial goals, while satisfying personal, corporate, and government obligations.

*Through their comments, participants in these Listening Sessions **identified the characteristics and qualities associated with Cooperative Conservation.***

These include:

- Trust,
- Mutual respect in partnerships,
- Personal/corporate responsibility,
- Agency accountability,
- Regulatory rationality,
- Exemplary science,
- Commitment of public policy and finance,
- Coordination and outreach among agencies and partners,
- Commitment to the community's economy, and
- Commitment to the next generation, and the next....

Practically all those offering comments through the Listening Session process expressed a willingness to engage in Cooperative Conservation. But if even one quality were lacking, many participants expressed concerns about outcomes.

Most commenters closed by thanking the “guest listeners” for the opportunity to be heard. It was obvious to many that this “thank you” was more than a gratuitous final gesture—but rather an appreciation that, regardless of where speakers and listeners stood on the issues at hand—the process of one person speaking to another, expressing their hopes, concerns, bad experiences, good experiences, and recommendations for actions—is the purest, most direct, and most gratifying form of governance.

Introduction

The history of the conservation movement in the United States is among the most fascinating sagas of human endeavor. More than a story of land and water and wildlife, it illustrates the complex American cultural experience with resource abundance and scarcity, and the role of the nation and individual in using, abusing, saving, and restoring.

Cooperative Conservation and its variants—community-based conservation, shared conservation governance, and collaborative conservation, among others—are contemporary terms describing an old but elegant idea: that a single individual can work in partnerships with others and government to develop ecologically sound and economically compatible conservation projects to ensure a community's quality of life. These partnerships are rooted in *trust and respect* among participating members, and are best understood *not* as exploitive alliances in which participants *demand* to get something, but as partnerships that benefit the entire community and nation.

This humble approach was eloquently articulated in *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (Leopold, 1949), arguably the most simple yet profound treatise on the role of the individual and society in cooperative conservation and a “land ethic:”

“...the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. His instincts prompt him to compete for his place in that community, but his ethics prompt him also to cooperate. ...In short, a land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such.” (pp. 203-204).

And in his writings “here and there,” Leopold (1949) identified the affected and appropriate partners in cooperative conservation (p. 205):

- The individual citizen (urban and rural dwellers),
- The landowner,
- The scientist,
- The citizen (“amateur”) naturalist,
- The builder,
- The bureaucrat,
- The legislator,
- The hunter/angler,
- The bird-watcher and hiker,
- The child—the future, and
- The natural resource (land (and soil), water, wildlife).

How appropriate, then, that the 2006 Cooperative Conservation Listening Sessions should give voice to these individuals and their community interests; thousands of citizens expressing their satisfactions and dissatisfactions with the past, concerns for today, and hopes for tomorrow—the personification of our nation's “land ethic.”

Conference Follow-up

As a follow-up to the President's Conference on Cooperative Conservation held in St. Louis in August 2005, the federal government hosted 25 Cooperative Conservation public Listening Sessions across the United States between August 9 and October 9, 2006. These Listening Sessions were hosted by:

- Department of the Interior (DOI)
- Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Department of Commerce (DOC)
- Department of Defense (DOD)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)

Sessions occurred in all regions of the country, from Hawaii to Florida, Alaska to Texas, and California to Maine.

The 2005 President's Conference on Cooperative Conservation identified three broad approaches to improving conservation: 1) promoting cooperation within the federal government, 2) promoting cooperation between the federal government and others, and 3) eliminating barriers to cooperation in existing policy.

My administration is committed to working in a spirit of respect and cooperation with those seeking to protect our land, and sea, and sky. We believe cooperative conservation is the best way to protect the environment. This means we must focus on the needs of states, and respect the unique knowledge of local authorities, and welcome the help of private groups and volunteers.

-President George W. Bush

The Cooperative Conservation public Listening Sessions were designed to ask Americans to share their ideas about how these approaches could be realized. Specifically, Americans were asked to share ideas and opinions on five broad questions related to what the federal government can do to improve cooperative conservation in this country:

1. How can the federal government enhance wildlife habitat, species protection, and other conservation outcomes through regulatory and voluntary conservation programs?
2. How can the federal government enhance cooperation among federal agencies and with states, tribes, and local communities in the application of environmental protection and conservation laws?
3. How can the federal government work with states, tribes, and other public- and private-sector partners to improve science used in environmental protection and conservation?
4. How can the federal government work cooperatively with businesses and landowners to protect the environment and promote conservation?
5. How can the federal government better respect the interests of people with ownership in land, water, and other natural resources?

Public participants who attended the Listening Sessions were able to provide their comments directly to high-ranking officials representing one or more of the five host agencies. Citizens also were able to submit written comments during the sessions and/or via mail, fax, or email.

Through these meetings we want to build on the legacy of cooperative conservation established under this administration and learn from the American people how the federal government can be an effective partner in conservation and environmental stewardship. We will travel the country listening to our fellow citizens who actually deal with the federal government and its many laws and programs. We want to share what has worked well and hear how we can do even better to achieve our conservation and other community goals.

-Dirk Kempthorne, Secretary of the Interior

This report is divided into the following sections:

- Methods – describes the various ways people could comment and how their comments were summarized.
- Results – summarizes what people said.
- Discussion – describes commenters' view of cooperative conservation and lists a few of the concepts that will help move cooperative conservation forward toward achieving conservation and other community goals.

Methods: collecting public comments

Hundreds of staff members spanning the Departments of Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Defense, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the White House Council on Environmental Quality were involved in planning the 25 Cooperative Conservation Listening Sessions held across the country. The Department of the Interior was the overall lead agency, but all contributed. The collaborative process between these agencies included: location selection, logistics, media and outreach. D.J. Case & Associates (DJ Case), a private conservation communications firm, was hired to provide consistent meeting moderation, accurate reporting of meeting proceedings, and compilation, summary and reporting of all public comments received throughout the process (at meetings and via mail, fax and email).

Public Input

Listening sessions were designed to provide the public with an open avenue to share thoughts, ideas, suggestions and recommendations with federal agency representatives on the subject of cooperative conservation. Moderators opened the sessions with a welcome and introductions, followed by the pledge of allegiance or national anthem, which at most sessions was led by local youth, such as girl scouts/boy scouts or by a community member. Agency representatives also



Seated from left to right: Secretary Kempthorne, Administrator Johnson, and Director Hall listen to a commenter at the Spokane, WA session.

provided opening comments/welcome, and then sat at tables in the front of the room to face the audience and listen to public comments. At a number of meetings, people from the local area made brief presentations on local projects that captured the spirit of cooperative conservation.

Preprinted comment cards were passed out to public attendees as they entered the Listening Session room. On the front of each card the five cooperative conservation questions were listed for reference. On the back of each card, the cooperative conservation website and the U.S.



Cooperative Conservation comment cards were distributed at all the Cooperative Conservation Listening Sessions.

Department of the Interior mail address and fax number were listed as alternative methods of submitting comments if attendees did not wish to speak publicly. Attendees also were invited to leave written comments in a box at the back of the room (some locations) or with the moderator to be collected at the end of the session. Moderators reiterated all the methods of submitting comments at the beginning and again at the end of the Listening Session. This report contains all public comments received in all forms through October 13, 2006.

The comment cards were numbered for use in soliciting public input in an organized manner (first come-first served). The process was designed to hear from as many people as possible, while giving everyone an equal chance to be heard. Moderators invited attendees to the microphone in numerical order. Attendees who wished to make public comments were asked to come to a microphone so all could hear and so a court reporter could capture the comments accurately. Moderators gave each speaker two to three minutes to make comments. Moderators called numbers until everyone in the room who wished to make comments had the opportunity. Most sessions ended with brief closing comments by the federal agency representatives.

Public Comment Analysis

Verbal comments made during the 25 Listening Sessions were documented by a court reporter and included in the transcript for each session. Some meeting attendees submitted written comments to meeting moderators at the end of the sessions, and public comments also were submitted to the Department of the Interior via email, fax and mail.

Regardless of the manner in which they were delivered, all comments were compiled and analyzed with equal importance. However, due to the different forms of submission (verbal, electronic and hard copy (written), different methods were employed to conduct the analysis.



Jefferson City, MO participants listen to other commenters at the session.

Transcripts (from all 25 Listening Sessions)

All meeting transcripts were reviewed and summarized by at least one DJ Case moderator—usually the moderator who facilitated the meeting, but sometimes another moderator who had facilitated other sessions. Ideas, opinions, and suggestions from each public comment were compiled into broad themes and topic areas and added to a master analysis database.

Written comments (submitted at sessions, faxed and mailed)

Written comments collected at the sessions, faxed or submitted by mail were each read, summarized and similarly incorporated into the master analysis database.

Emailed comments

Due to the large number of comments received via email, Atlas.ti[®] software was used to assist the analysis process. The vast majority of emails submitted shared one or more identical paragraphs or unique phrases, suggesting that they were based, at least in part, on several common templates. The software was used to flag matching emails and separate them into categories. The content of the “base” letter from each category was added into the master analysis database. In addition, emails in each category were searched for unique content (e.g., a customized introduction or remarks in addition to the template content). When unique content was found within template emails, it was summarized and added to the master analysis database, as was content of emails that were written completely “from scratch.” This process allowed for speed and efficiency of analysis while minimizing the potential for missing unique comments.

Keyword Analysis

In addition to the content search described above, Atlas.ti[®] software also was used to perform a keyword search on public comments.

A list containing more than 250 keywords and phrases was provided by the DOI, USDA, EPA, DOD, and the Department of Commerce. These were entered into the software, which then searched all electronic files (emails and transcripts) for keyword matches. The result was a list of these keywords and phrases with a count of each time they appeared in the text. This keyword analysis was used to help analysts determine how to group concepts in the master analysis document and to get a measure of their relative importance.

After all of the various forms of submitted comments were reviewed and summarized as described above, moderators compiled and categorized this information into a *Summary of Comments on Cooperative Conservation* that can be found in the *Results* section of this report.

Results: reporting what the public said

Twenty-five Listening Sessions were held in 25 different cities throughout the United States (see Table 1). The number of people in attendance at each session is an estimate, established by the actual number of comment cards distributed to participants as they came through the door and the moderator’s estimate of the number of attendees who chose not to take a card (agency staff and others).

Table 1. Locations of and attendance at Listening Sessions.

Date	Location	Approx. # of Attendees	# of Speakers	Duration (including breaks)
August 9, 2006	Spokane, WA	183	49	4 hrs
August 14, 2006	Roanoke, VA	60	37	4 ¼ hrs
August 14, 2006	Helena, MT	89	50	3 hrs
August 21, 2006	Columbus, OH	105	31	2 ¾ hrs
August 22, 2006	Redmond, OR	123	71	4 ¾ hrs
August 24, 2006	Omaha, NE	98	34	3 ½ hrs
August 26, 2006	Muncie, IN	31	18	2 hrs
August 28, 2006	Fairbanks, AK	82	43	3 ¼ hrs
August 29, 2006	Jefferson City, MO	100	37	2 ½ hrs
August 30, 2006	Enid, OK	165	50	3 ¼ hrs
September 5, 2006	Corpus Christi, TX	50	20	1 ¾ hrs
September 7, 2006	Honolulu, HI	143	39	4 hrs
September 12, 2006	Snowflake, AZ	76	36	2 ½ hrs
September 13, 2006	Redding, CA	134	64	3 ½ hrs
September 15, 2006	Colorado Springs, CO	89	44	2 ½ hrs
September 15, 2006	Miami, FL	46	29	3 hrs
September 18, 2006	Pottstown, PA	45	22	2 hrs
September 19, 2006	Pinedale, WY	97	43	3 hrs
September 20, 2006	Brewer, ME	93	53	3 ½ hrs
September 21, 2006	Brunswick, GA	67	27	2 ¼ hrs
September 25, 2006	Orlando, FL	80	31	2 hrs
September 27, 2006	Waco, TX	52	32	2 ½ hrs
September 28, 2006	San Bernardino, CA	62	57	4 hrs
September 29, 2006	Northampton, MA	60	28	2 hrs
October 9, 2006	Boise, ID	57	33	2 ¼ hrs

The lead federal agency representatives who attended each meeting are shown in Appendix A.

At most of the sessions, one or more presenters were invited to the podium to make brief presentations on local projects that captured the spirit of cooperative conservation (transcripts of presentations are available at <http://cooperativeconservation.gov/>).

People who were interested in giving input but could not attend a Listening Session or did not choose to make verbal comments in public were encouraged to submit written comments during the session or by fax, letter, or email. Overall, 34,024 individual comments were received (see Table 2).

In addition to individual comments, the Aveda Corporation submitted a petition letter with approximately 176,000 signatures attached.

Table 2. Source of comments received on Cooperative Conservation.

Public Listening Session Comments	Comments handed-in during sessions ^a	Emailed comments	Faxed Comments	Mailed Comments	Total Comments ^b	Petition Signatures ^c
978	3,438	29,448	32	128	34,024	176,000

^a 3300 postcards supporting the protection of Teshekpuk Lake Special Area, AK, were handed in during the Brewer, ME Listening Session.

^b Some comments may have been counted more than once because they were submitted in several different forms (e.g., delivered at Listening Session and emailed). This total does not include the signatures listed on the petition.

^c One petition was submitted with approximately 176,000 signatures.

More individual comments were received through email than any other source. Nearly all of these email messages shared one or more identical paragraphs or key phrases, suggesting that they were based, at least in part, on a common template. However, many of them did have additional comments or suggestions and were considered independently.

All comments received, whether in person or by letter, fax, or email, were considered during preparation of this report.

Summary of Comments on Cooperative Conservation

The petition letter submitted by the Aveda Corporation opposed any efforts to weaken the Endangered Species Act and U.S. environmental laws. It also supported full funding for all environmental programs—both core and cooperative conservation.

The vast majority of email comments expressed support for maintaining or strengthening the Endangered Species Act and/or opposing oil and gas drilling in the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area in Alaska.

All public comments (verbal, email, fax and mail) were summarized into the 22 major categories below. Each major category is followed by a list of more specific subcategories that reflect the range of comments provided. In many cases, comments could have been placed into multiple categories because of overlap in content. However, whenever possible, comments were placed into the single category that best captured the presumed intent of the commenter.

In some cases, comments within a certain category were very broad and easy to combine with many other responses (e.g., “Provide adequate funding for USFWS” was easily combined into the broader category “Fully fund state and federal agencies”). In other cases, comments were very specific and only offered by very few commenters. *This report presents the range of comments.* No attempt was made to quantify how many times a given comment was made. Many of the specific, detailed comments were by necessity combined with other related issues at some

lesser degree of detail (e.g., “Earmark a portion of Dingell-Johnson funds to work on target species on parcels immediately adjacent to units of the National Park Service” was combined into “Allow National Park Service to use federal funds on adjacent lands.”). Specific details omitted from this report can be found in the original meeting transcripts at <http://cooperativeconservation.gov/>. However, every comment made is reflected in this summary.

It should be noted that, although it was not included as a separate category, commenters mentioned the need for outreach/education/information in almost every topic.

Issue/Topic Categories

Climate Change

Cooperative Conservation

Corporate Responsibility

Drilling in Arctic NWR/Alaska (and other)

Environmental Laws (General)

- Clean Water Act (CWA)
- Endangered Species Act (ESA)
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Everglades Restoration Project

Farm Bill

Forestry Issues

Funding

Leadership/Staffing

Native American/Tribal Issues

Oil and Gas Drilling/Mining (General)

Private Lands

Public Lands

Technology

Urban Sprawl/Development

Miscellaneous – National

Answers to 5 Cooperative Conservation Questions

Regional or State Issues

Climate Change

- Determine impacts of climate change/global warming on protecting biodiversity.
- Determine how climate change/global warming effects natural resource conservation.
- Reduce or stop climate change/global warming.
- Consider the effects of climate change/global warming in development of future regulations, policies and laws.
- Need sustainable energy, focusing on conservation efficiency and alternatives, to reduce the impacts that climate change/global warming and fossil fuel usage has on the environment.
- Develop a comprehensive climate change/global warming policy.
- Research impacts of climate change/global warming.

Cooperative Conservation

Comments on cooperative conservation covered the entire spectrum, from total opposition to total support. Many commenters predicated their support or opposition on the degree to which agencies addressed their concerns or suggestions for implementing it.

- Cooperative conservation takes time but it works.
- It always outperforms regulatory measures.
- It works when it is voluntary and incentive-based.
- It must be based on trust and mutual respect.
- Support and provide additional opportunities for cooperative conservation.
- It is a good idea but not a substitute for the ESA and other environmental laws.
- It won't work because it's not in our nature to voluntarily cooperate and conserve.
- Opposed to cooperative conservation (programs and legislation).
- It will just open the door for "the rich" and big business to destroy the environment.
- Favor environmental laws over cooperative conservation.
- Must involve all stakeholders, including landowners and NGOs (not just experts).
- One size does not fit all—must be customized to situations.
- Needs to be truly cooperative, not coerced.
- Needs financial support for programs and field staff to be effective.
- Outreach and communications are critical to make it work.
- Agencies should use a science-based adaptive management approach, but should not use the concept of adaptive management as an excuse for not changing poor management actions (need defined thresholds for alternative action).
- Need to remove administrative, legal, regulatory and bureaucratic barriers that prevent federal government from engaging in it effectively.
- Need to show relationship between cooperative conservation and economic renewal.
- Will require better coordination among natural resource agencies.
- Should be based on sound science.
- Will pay for itself through long-term stewardship goals.
- Use state wildlife action plans to guide federal actions.
- Connection to state wildlife action plans should be included in all draft cooperative conservation programs.

Corporate Responsibility

Most comments on corporate responsibility centered around concerns that too few corporations were placing a high priority on responsible corporate citizenship regarding the environment.

- Concerned that natural resources and environment will be sold off to corporations.
- Big business interests should not take priority over environmental protection.
- Creating a new American industry centered around clean energy would create enormous profits and wealth for our country.
- Administration work with corporate sector to develop green office buildings and programs.
- Recognize the importance of industry in effective conservation work (eg: use of pesticides in eradication of invasive species, etc.).

Drilling in Arctic NWR/Alaska (and other)

The vast majority of comments on drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge were opposed to this activity. Most wanted permanent protection of the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area and/or other areas of environmental significance.

- Do not allow oil and gas drilling in Alaska (Teshekpuk Lake).
- “Permanently protect” Teshekpuk Lake Special Area.
- Support energy development within the U.S., including Alaska National Wildlife Refuge.
- Map and designate special areas that will be off limits to oil and gas development.
- Don’t drill along antelope and elk migration routes in traditional Native American lands.
- Mandate that all rigs be powered by natural gas

Environmental Laws (General)

A wide variety of environmental laws were mentioned by commenters. Those mentioned most frequently (CWA, ESA, and NEPA) have their own categories and are not addressed in this category. Comments covered the entire spectrum, from advocating strengthening of laws to advocating their abolishment. Comments on environmental laws in general are grouped near the top of this category, and comments on specific laws are toward the bottom. In general, commenters acknowledged the need for environmental laws, but many were very concerned about impacts of the laws on the ground.

- Strengthen environmental laws.
- Don’t weaken environmental laws.
- Abolish all environmental laws.
- Equitably enforce existing environmental laws (Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Wilderness Act, Endangered Species Act, National Forest Management Act, the National Environmental Policy Act were mentioned specifically).
- Balance conservation and economic growth.
- Need concise environmental laws that can be easily interpreted.
- Do not replace environmental laws with voluntary programs.
- Opposed to changes that would allow businesses and agencies to lower standards.
- Need strong executive level and inter-agency support for environmental laws.
- Utilize un-biased facilitators to gather input from stakeholders and public when creating or updating environmental laws or regulations.
- Ensure federal agencies uphold their statutory and regulatory responsibilities.
- Provide staff with ample field time to develop relationships with state and tribal agencies and local communities.
- Take political appointees from industry out of environmental management positions and replace them with personnel appropriately trained for positions they hold.
- Use professional mediators when faced with impasses between stakeholders.
- Permitting
 - Streamline the process – define the process, responsibilities, roles and timelines.
 - Make the process open and transparent.
 - Be more responsive to the regulated public.
 - Focus on environmental protection rather than paperwork requirements.
 - Remove duplicative federal and state permit requirements.
- Improve CAFE standards for fuel efficiency.
- Need a national watershed protection program.
- Don’t pass the Good Samaritan Clean Watersheds Act.

- Support the National Forest Management Act.
- Support the Clean Air Act.
- Reauthorize and fully fund the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation Act.
- Revise Healthy Forest Act (e.g. needs a fine fuel component, etc).
- Abolish Healthy Forest Act.
- Support proposed Cooperative Conservation Enhancement Act.
- Litigation costs are reducing the effectiveness of environmental laws.
- Provide legislative assurances that mitigation performed under environmental laws will not only satisfy today's requirements, but future requirements.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions via carbon sequestration by soil conservation practices of farmers.
- Need stronger safeguards for toxic air emissions, non-point source and point source pollution.

Clean Water Act (CWA)

Many commenters had opinions about and suggestions regarding the Clean Water Act. Most recommended changes to the Act—from making it clearer/less burdensome for impacted landowners, to broadening/strengthening protections for the waters of the US. The most specific comments focused on stormwater permitting and wetlands.

- Clean Water Act regulations are arbitrary and burdensome for landowners.
- Needs updating and streamlining.
- Need equitable enforcement of CWA regulations.
- Stormwater permitting
 - Permit process is arbitrary and onerous.
 - Streamline permitting and inspection process.
 - Remove duplicative federal permit requirements.
 - Develop consistent federal/state enforcement policies.
 - Stormwater prevention plans should take into account local and regional topographical and meteorological differences.
 - Develop federal/state watershed partnership programs.
- Wetlands
 - Expand the practice of wetland banking.
 - Formal rulemaking to clarify jurisdiction over isolated wetlands.
 - No wetland banking outside the impacted watershed.
 - Streamline the permitting process.
 - Focus the program on wetlands with high ecological value.
 - Provide regulatory incentives.
 - Re-evaluate wetlands mitigation.
 - Simplify and shorten Section 404 permit process.
- Provide clearer guidelines on jurisdiction over waters of the US (COE or EPA).
- Need proactive planning for aquatic invasive species issues.
- Establish guidelines for scientific information to be applied to all permitting decisions.
- Bring regulations into conformity with long-held agency interpretations of the CWA.
- Reestablish federal protection of all waters of the US through passage CWA Restoration Act of 2005.

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

There were more comments (by far) directed at the ESA than any other topic mentioned in the Listening Session process. Comments covered the entire spectrum, from stating the ESA has been a failure that should be abolished, to stating the ESA has been very successful and should be strengthened. A variety of recommendations were made regarding ways the Act could be streamlined, reformed, and/or updated, and these are listed in related topic areas within the list below.

- ESA has been a failure.
- ESA should be abolished.
- ESA has been very successful.
- ESA works and should be strengthened, not weakened.
- Only minor changes needed to improve protection and efficient implementation.
- Enforce ESA.
- Reduce political interference in enforcement of ESA.
- ESA too burdensome for landowners.
- It is unfair for a small minority of citizens to be forced by government to carry an inordinate burden of larger societal goals.
- ESA is hindering needed housing development projects.
- Immediately release for public comment any new ESA regulations.
- Regulatory agencies assign senior policy officials to help solve ESA problems.
- Federal aid to states for endangered species recovery should be based on the number of endangered species in a state.
- Need to know specific objectives for species recovery.
- Congress should work with partners to convene a collaborative process to improve the science used by federal agencies in ESA compliance.
- ESA should provide incentives to foreign nations to encourage them to protect threatened and endangered species.
- Provide education workshops, updated websites, brochures, and information on species of concern (outreach and education efforts).
- Should focus on ecosystem health, not single species recovery.
- Need science-based program that protects endangered species while recognizing private property rights and the need for continued economic growth.
- Pass HR 3824
- Create statutory distinction between threatened and endangered status.
- Seek Congressional recognition of the need for preventive conservation.
- Adopt into regulation, expand and encourage FWS and National Marine Fisheries Service to publicize the Safe Harbor Agreement Program.
- Focus on the big picture instead of treating each plant and animal species equal.
- Reward ESA success stories with public recognition and additional funding.
- Streamline, reform, and update ESA.
 - Notify federal permit holders whenever there is a citizen lawsuit filed under ESA.
 - Create commonsense and easy-to-understand definitions for key regulatory terms such as “adverse modification,” “jeopardy,” “take,” “distinct population,” “recovery” and “best scientific and commercial data available.”
 - Need to focus more on recovery, not just prevention of extinction.
 - Reform the “citizen lawsuit” provisions to promote recovery of Species of Concern.
 - No repayment of attorney’s fees.

- Clarify each agency's role to minimize problems and inconsistencies in the process.
- Simplify and clarify requirements for incidental take.
- Provide "safe-harbor" provisions to make ESA more flexible and to encourage landowners to manage lands in a more "endangered species-friendly" manner.
- Create a full portfolio of incentives for private landowners, other government agencies and industry.
- Enforce prompt completion of all 5-year status reviews required by ESA.
- Critical Habitat Designation
 - Compensate landowners whenever critical habitat designation results in a taking.
 - Establish critical habitat guidance to ensure an open and consistent designation process that accounts for cumulative economic and social impacts.
 - Need to establish the highest priority habitats or "critical habitats" when defining the needs of the species at risk, not within a year of listing.
- Consultation Process
 - Adopt streamlined consultation procedures for minor projects and projects that have already undergone extensive review.
 - Require consultation deadlines to begin on date of action agency request for consultation.
 - Limit the scope of consultations to discretionary federal actions.
 - Ensure that reinitiation of consultation on a federal action does not invalidate the incidental take protection included in the original biological opinion.
 - Provide earlier and more meaningful opportunities for citizens to participate in recovery plans and consultation process.
 - Adopt firm regulatory time limits on Section 7 consultations.
 - Reduce or eliminate consultation on federal actions that are not likely to adversely affect endangered or threatened species.
 - Make biological opinions shorter by eliminating boilerplate language.
 - Update the emergency consultation procedures to include fires and other threats.
- Habitat Conservation Plan
 - Streamline development and implementation of Habitat Conservation Plans.
 - Habitat Conservation Plans and mitigation will promote species recovery better than critical habitat designations.
 - Include low impact recreation in Habitat Conservation Plans.
 - Support proactive conservation plans that reduce need for listing species.
- Recovery Plan
 - Make recovery plans meaningful and nondiscretionary, with incentives and obligations for all parties.
 - Before "take" is allowed, require an approved Recovery Plan to ensure that any "take" is consistent with species recovery.
 - Do not allow loss of habitat for listed species without an approved Recovery Plan.
- Species Listing Process
 - Establish a listing priority ranking system and decision model for evaluating petitions for listing.
 - Increase states' role in review of the listing process.
 - Expedite the delisting process.
 - Require non-government, unbiased peer review for species listing.
 - If listing is determined unwarranted, make petitioners responsible for costs.

- Require appropriate bonding by any petitioner for a proposed listing.
- Include the regulated community in voluntary pre-listing activities, conservation efforts, and education.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Most comments on NEPA were in favor of changes or updates that would streamline and clarify the process for the regulated community.

- CEQ should study NEPA's interaction with other federal laws, current NEPA agency staffing issues, and NEPA's interaction with state environmental policy acts.
- NEPA should not specify how agencies would evaluate the effects of past actions for assessing cumulative impacts.
- Streamline and clarify NEPA
 - Clarify and codify definitions and standards.
 - Require that "credible scientific evidence" meet a high standard for reliability.
 - Remove "reasonably foreseeable future action" from analysis of cumulative effects.
 - CEQ should promulgate regulations making clear the types of future actions appropriate for consideration under cumulative impact analysis.
 - Add mandatory timelines to the completion of NEPA documents.
 - Amend NEPA such that supplemental NEPA documents are not required once the agency has issued a final decision.
 - Do not amend NEPA to allow existing state environmental review processes to satisfy NEPA requirements.
 - Grant cooperating agency status to any federal agency that has jurisdiction by law.
 - Create a Citizen Lawsuit Provision.
 - Limit "reasonable alternatives" to those that are economically and technically feasible.
 - Encourage more consultation with stakeholders.
- Encourage cooperation between building industry and regulatory agencies.
- Reconsider EPA decision to regulate coarse particulate matter.
- EPA work on biological opinions should keep pace with development of NEPA compliance documents.
- Recognize the appropriate role of permittees in the public involvement process.
- Create and maintain a publicly-accessible database of all EISs and EAs to facilitate broader use and sharing of scientific information and methods.
- Use environmental assessment or categorical exclusion instead of requiring full-blown EIS.

Everglades Restoration Project

The Everglades are only found in Florida, but comments about the Everglades were received from multiple states around the country. All comments supported additional resources and funding for Everglades restoration. Most comments were broad and are represented by the first three bullet points below. The final bullet point contains some specific recommendations for Lake Okeechobee.

- More funding for Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project (CERP).
- Stop development on lands needed for Everglades restoration.
- Kissimmee Chain of Lakes needs to be included in the Everglades Restoration Project.
- Improve water schedule and Lake Okeechobee's health:

- Rapid implementation of the Corps of Engineers' plan for reinforcement of Herbert Hoover Dike.
- Development of specific performance measures for Lake Okeechobee snail kites, wading birds and peat soils to improve evaluation of the plan.
- Lowering the "Operational Guidance" (target) line in the spring to ensure reaching 14.5 feet by March 1 to ensure suitable conditions for wading bird nesting.
- Experimentation with continuous low-volume flows of water to the St. Lucie Estuary, rather than higher-volume pulses.
- Model predictions specifically for the wet climate pattern that Florida is experiencing.
- Increase water storage and treatment in and around the Lake Okeechobee watershed to reduce reliance on flushing water east and west through the estuaries.
- Increased conveyance of clean water south to assist with Everglades' restoration.

Farm Bill

Most comments on the Farm Bill recognized that it has been a positive force for conservation in the U.S. There were no recommendations to do away with it, but there were a variety of suggestions for making improvements for the future.

- Reauthorize all conservation titles.
- Update cost-share rates in conservation titles.
- Need more cooperation among federal agencies and states.
- Revise Conservation Security Program (CSP) to meet the needs of all producers, not just the "big 5" commodity producers.
- Expand CSP to include working forestlands and increase funding.
- Provide greater emphasis on forest conservation and stewardship in existing programs.
- Add forestry title that carefully encourages large-scale ecosystem restoration.
- Reauthorize and expand CSP, provided it does not replace or reduce funding for other Farm Bill programs.
- Fully integrate soil, water, and wildlife habitat into CSP.
- Support Wetland Reserve Program, Conservation Security Program and Environmental Quality Incentives Program.
- Maintain annual allocation for WRP of at least 250,000 acres.
- Conservation Reserve Program needs to be rethought and restructured.
- Reauthorize CRP and raise the cap to at least 45 million acres nationally.
- Prohibit federal funding of ecologically destructive practices (e.g., aerial herbicide spraying).
- Need landowner confidentiality in federal programs.
- Needs practical implementation of the desired practices, tailored to production areas.
- Include more family producers and smaller landowners.
- Adjust EQIP to provide an equal emphasis on forestland stewardship and conservation.
- Reauthorize and expand EQIP; make all on-farm lands be eligible to receive cost-share.
- Allow for managed grazing within CREP.
- Remove incentives to convert native grasslands that don't have previous cropping history.
- Reauthorize and fully fund WHIP.
- Streamline technical service provider requirements to make programs easier to deliver.
- Needs to be regionally equitable and locally led.

- Fish and wildlife should be equal in priority to soil and water in all conservation programs.
- Establish a habitat technical team of natural resource experts in each state to help with Farm Bill conservation programs.

Forestry Issues

A majority of forestry issue comments focused on wildfires and logging. Commenters provided recommendations to reduce or prevent wildfires by improving fire policies and procedures. Timber and logging comments varied. Some commenters said there was too much logging and others said more logging was needed to improve forest habitats.

- Need prescribed burns to reduce biomass and prevent wildfires.
- Need suppression policies to save forests, critical wildlife habitat, key watershed, and private property while also wisely spending taxpayer's money.
- Need better post-fire clean-up.
- Fuel loading issue needs to be resolved.
- Eliminate the strict liability clause for fire suppression and utility easements
- Timber cutting is needed to improve habitat for successional forest species.
- Decrease logging to stop all environmental degradation.
- Terminate timber quota program and instead charge resource managers with acreage restored.
- Encourage timber stand improvement.
- Reduce complaints and litigation that curtail federal timber sales.
- Implement US Forest Service invasive species control plan.
- Create and foster markets for environmental services such as carbon sequestration along with conservation easements and other programs.
- Need to purchase conservation restrictions on half of the lands, mostly from private landowners, to protect forests.
- Forest Legacy conservation restrictions need to be held by a nonprofit.
- Modify the yellow book appraisal system.
- Allow non-profits to hold interest in forest lands that are protected with federal funds.
- Continue stewardship contracting with the US Forest Service.
- Define "woody biomass" in statutes and regulations as wood not as wood residue.

Funding

Funding was the only issue that was supported by nearly everyone who commented on it. Increased funding for conservation activities was supported by nearly all commenters. A host of conservation programs were mentioned specifically. Other broad conservation issues or topic areas were mentioned more generally.

- Increase funding to national conservation programs.
- Do not take funds from existing conservation programs for cooperative conservation.
- Fully fund:
 - Cooperative conservation
 - Conservation Security Program
 - Federal cost share programs
 - Conservation Reserve Program
 - Wetland Reserve Program
 - Environmental Quality Incentives Program

- Renewable Resource Extension Act
- Endangered Species Act (listing, recovery, consultation, and cooperative conservation)
- Forest Health Protection Program
- Forest Legacy Program
- Forest Stewardship Program
- Landowner Conservation Fund
- Landowner Incentive Program
- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- USFWS Partners for Wildlife program
- North American Wetland Conservation Act
- NRCS technical staff
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- RC&Ds
- National Parks and National Wildlife Refuge System
- Renewable Energy Production Incentive
- Everglades restoration project
- State and federal agencies
- State wildlife action plans
- Forest Legacy Program
- McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program and Renewable Resources Extension Act.
- Forest Land Enhancement Program
- Invest in land grant university programs.
- Continue Americorps program.
- Fund outreach and education efforts within conservation projects.
- Reduce the roadblocks to utilizing non-USDA federal funds by SWCDs and RC&Ds.
- Switch funding from commodity-based to conservation-based.
- Increase funding for federal land acquisition.
- Grants for local research and pilot projects on the connection between human health and conservation.
- Fully fund agencies responsible for health and safety and the natural environment.
- Increase National Park Service budget for resource education efforts.
- Allow National Park Service to use federal funds on adjacent lands (e.g., for invasive weed control) when it benefits the park.
- Increase funding for local watershed action plans.
- Allow states the option to have qualified non-profit organizations hold easements that are funded with federal Forest Legacy funds.
- State wildlife action plans
 - Need federal support and permanent funding to implement.
 - Reduce the required state matching funding to receive federal grant money.
- Support payments for forest-based ecosystem services.
- Increase operations and maintenance funding for national wildlife refuges so partnerships with Friends groups and local non-profits can continue.
- Fire safe councils need more funding.
- Need funding for enhancement projects and conservation easements on working ranches in conjunction with safe harbor easements.

Leadership/Staffing

Many commenters spoke highly about the assistance received from federal agency staff. Others related negative experiences and provided specific recommendations for improving federal agency staffing. Many commenters requested additional training for federal staff and cooperative conservation partners. Other commenters wanted federal agency staff to be more flexible and less focused on regulating.

- Leadership training needed for all staff who participate in cooperative conservation.
- Departments of the Interior and Agriculture conduct workshops, provide user guides, and develop on-line training for staff.
- Address aging and retiring federal agency staff (loss of experience).
- Staff needs to be more flexible.
- Staff develop trust with public and stakeholders.
- Empower employees and improve morale.
- Staff needs to be more cooperative instead of being focused on regulatory.
- Improve inter-agency communication.
- Train on-the-ground staff to work with stakeholders on controversial issues.
- Federal conservation agencies work with federal health agency to inform the public about the health issues arising from polluted air and water.
- Federal conservation agencies need to handle human resource issues properly (address employee harassment, discrimination, retaliation and whistle-blowing)
- More respect for the interest of people, land ownership, water and natural resources.
- Federal agencies should conduct internal audits of management methods and performance philosophies.
- Federal agencies need to follow the laws they enforce.

Native American/Tribal Issues

Most Native American comments were received from the west coast states and Alaska. Some commenters indicated that federal agencies need to respect, understand and appreciate the Native American culture. Many commenters expressed the Native American commitment to conserving natural resources.

- Federal government needs consistent tribal consultation policies.
- Indian treaty rights are often not properly understood or appreciated.
- Realize tribes are capable of managing natural and cultural resources.
- Need federal funding to help tribes supervise conservation actions.
- Fish and Wildlife Service should not make long-term conservation easements on tribal lands a condition of incidental take permits.
- Tribes should not be treated as 3rd party development companies for purposes of issuing incidental take permits, but as cooperative partners within the intent and purpose of Secretarial Order 3206.
- DOI should adopt regulations to implement Secretarial Order number 3206.
- Support energy development in territories as long as it is in balance with the environment, environmental protection and conservation.
- Fish and Wildlife Service should facilitate the development and approval of Tribal Habitat Conservation Plans to promote conservation, respect tribal sovereignty, and exemplify the potential for collaboration.
- Fish and Wildlife Service should exclude Agus Caliente lands from revised rule of designating critical habitat for the Peninsular bighorn sheep.

- Fish and Wildlife Service should not require conservation easements to assure long-term protections on tribal lands as a condition of incidental take permit issuance.

Oil and Gas Drilling/Mining (General)

The vast majority of comments on oil and gas drilling and mining were divided into two “camps.” One camp was opposed to most oil and gas exploration on public lands because of negative impacts to the environment, while the other was in favor of it because it reduced America’s dependence on foreign sources of energy.

- Do not sell off public land for oil and gas drilling.
- Clean up old mines to protect water quality.
- Stop mining and grazing on public lands.
- Oil and gas drilling has negative impacts on environment.
- Encourage geophysical hydrocarbon exploration—good for environment in long run.
- Make “Good Samaritan” clean-up of abandoned mines easier.
- Don’t destroy wide open spaces with oil and gas wells.
- Pursue renewable energy alternatives to reduce America’s addiction to oil and gas.
- Federal agencies should monitor and limit the pace of drilling activity.
- Oil rigs should be powered by natural gas.

Private Lands

Most commenters agreed that federal agencies need to work with private landowners to conserve natural resources—especially in the East where most of the land is privately held. Many commenters said that existing private lands programs are very helpful to landowners, but that more funding was needed for voluntary efforts.

- Support private landowner rights.
- Provide opportunities and funding for voluntary conservation programs.
- Identify cooperative, voluntary agreements for land exchanges with private landowners.
- Provide incentives to create wildlife corridors between large tracts of public land.
- Policies that assure the profitability of agriculture production help preserve habitat and open space.
- Fully fund the Fish and Wildlife Service’s Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.
- Encourage farmers to use drip irrigation.
- US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management should work with adjoining landowners to plan and execute cooperative prescribed burns on a watershed scale. This will fully utilize FS and BLM personnel and equipment during off-fire season.
- Adjust conservation program priorities to emphasize and include private forestlands.
- Dedicate larger portions of funds to private forestland stewardship and conservation in programs like EQIP and CSP.
- Need to expand outreach and workshops to farmers, ranchers and landowners to provide them information about available conservation programs and how to manage forests.
- Fund Forest Legacy program commensurate with demand and allow states to let qualified non-profit organizations hold easements.
- Integrate federal policies with a market-based system to effectively value and provide for ecosystem services.
- Standardize federally and privately owned rangelands.
- Technical assistance from federal agency staff is important for private land conservation efforts.

- Recognize the value of agricultural production.
- Protect flood plain lands critical to farmland.
- Public needs to be informed of the value of irrigation.
- Need grazing permittees, require long-term plant community data as a basis to justify renewal grazing permits.

Public Lands

Most commenters agreed that public lands are beneficial to Americans and need more funding. However, comments varied about how the public lands should be used. Some commenters wanted increased recreation on public lands, while others wanted a return to the “preservation first” philosophy and no additional public land development.

- Improve and increase access to public lands.
- Maintain quality habitat on federal lands—no new roads.
- Reinstate the Roadless Areas Conservation Rule.
- Keep roadless areas roadless.
- Return to the “preservation first” philosophy on National Parks.
- Facilitate land exchanges to consolidate public lands.
- Do not transfer lands without adequate review, assessment and public discussion.
- Address the maintenance backlog on public lands.
- Don’t sell off public lands.
- No oil and gas drilling on public lands.
- No grazing or mining on public lands.
- Involve public in the process of managing public land.
- Improve treatment of wild horses and burros.
- Create a federal income tax check-off to fund national parks.
- Provide land-use planning grants to communities around national parks.
- Federal land managers should provide assistance to owners of neighboring lands to maintain biological integrity of their land.
- Federal resources should not be used to support game populations identified as threats to watersheds or native plants.
- Create/support a network of public/private rare/native plant projects to accelerate recovery.
- Federal Government maintain its lead role in upholding federal laws and managing federal lands.
- Recreational uses of public lands:
 - Do not discourage hunting, trapping, or the shooting sports on public lands.
 - Restrict or stop hunting and trapping on public lands.
 - Increase protection of forests to prevent illegal hunters.
 - Expand OHV/ORV access to federal lands.
 - Local managers should be allotted the necessary resources to be able to bring conservation and recreation groups together and seek consensus.
 - Provide superior opportunities for recreation that minimize impacts to resources.
 - Prohibit recreational vehicles in national parks.
- Do not move wildlife in urban areas to federal land (coyotes, wolves).
- Establish a multi-jurisdictional fire suppression task force to review and realign agency fire suppression policies on public lands.

- Combine the USDA and DOI lands together for conservation projects
- Fund National Park Service programs that assess health of wildlife populations.
- Do not open national parks to commercial or industrial tampering.

Technology

Commenters said federal agencies need to better utilize the most up-to-date technology resources to improve natural resource conservation.

- Federal agencies need updated electronic technology to improve conservation practices.
 - Updated database of wildlife, waters, habitats and lands.
 - Incorporate GIS and GPS into conservation planning.
 - Improve electronic communications with public (i.e. RSS feeds, Internet, searchable databases).

Urban Sprawl/Development

Many commenters on urban sprawl and development suggested the need to reduce the pace of development because rapid development was threatening natural resources and agriculture lands. Many others suggested the need to balance development (especially homebuilding) with conservation, because both were important to quality of life.

- Need to balance development with conservation.
- Over-development a serious threat to conservation and agriculture.
- Protect farmland from suburban encroachment.
- Need to control population to reduce development to conserve natural resources.

Miscellaneous – National

This category captures issues that did not fit under the other categories. Many of these are not related to each other. Some comments were very specific and other comments very broad.

- Need to focus on water quantity and quality issues.
- Strengthen policies to help protect 1st order streams and tributaries.
- Need national watershed education.
- Support and fund invasive species control.
- Enforce the laws that protect the public's health.
- Emphasize the connection between human health and conservation.
- EPA needs to facilitate health and safety protection and development (e.g. landfills, etc).
- Encourage Department of Defense to create Compatible Use Buffers for conservation around military installations.
- Support National Fish Habitat Initiative.
- Expand federal funding for environmental education.
- Increase non-formal (adult) education regarding conservation issues.
- Provide grants for high school and college ecological research.
- Determine the effects of wind power on wildlife.
- Small towns and small land trusts need state and national government expertise and technical assistance.
- Support land banks.
- Need rural development for economic vitality, better timber pricing, better cattle pricing.
- Improve public input process.
- Support HR 408, Federal Wildland Firefighter Emergency Response Compensation Act.
- Don't change or alter scientific data to favor industry.

- Don't allow political appointees to evaluate and interpret scientific results.
- Hold future Listening Sessions in larger cities and not during working hours.
- Need improved air quality.
- Improve monitoring and regulatory supervision for air emissions and particulate contamination.
- Improve the resource management plan process by involving local personnel and cooperating agencies.
- Develop a blanket MOU between cooperators and BLM and other federal agencies.
- Support and cooperate with states trying to control diseases (e.g., West Nile Virus—Boise, CWD—Brunswick, Tuberculosis—Brunswick).
- Need stronger land use planning laws.

Answers to 5 Cooperative Conservation Questions

Nearly all of the comments submitted were related to one or more of the five cooperative conservation questions. However, very few commenters addressed their comments to any of the questions *specifically*. Following is a listing of the unique comments that were specifically identified as feedback to one of the five questions. Most of these comments also are covered in the categories above, but if commenters addressed their remarks to a specific question, the comments were placed here as well.

Question #1: How can the federal government enhance wildlife habitat, species protection, and other conservation outcomes through regulatory and voluntary conservation programs?

- Reduce regulatory programs and greatly increase voluntary programs.
- Increase funding for wildlife research.
- Increase the ability to voluntarily conserve on a parcel by parcel basis. Use set aside conservation easements to allow some habitat to be preserved, and the rest of a private parcel to be used by the landowner for production.
- Give grants to nonprofit conservation organizations (Audubon, Nature Conservancy, etc.).
- Provide incentives to landowners to protect existing habitat through programs designed to enhance riparian zones.
- Collaborate with non-profits in Massachusetts who are leading “buy local” projects.
- Provide financial support to private property owners to keep property out of production.
- Need stronger laws and increased funding for conservation.
- Reform ESA.
- Communicate with local partners to inform them that cooperative conservation is a two-way responsibility.

Question #2: How can the federal government enhance cooperation among federal agencies and with states, tribes, and local communities in the application of environmental protection and conservation laws?

- Federal agencies need to inform each other of programs and activities.
- Communicate with states, tribes and local communities, not just consult.
- Federal government could start looking at ecosystems instead of government lines.
- Be fair and consistent.
- Grant money for teacher training and salary while receiving training. Projects WET, WILD and Learning TREE are great examples of science-based courses that are under-utilized because they take a lot of time and money.

- Encourage voluntary conservation efforts.
- Increase funding for voluntary programs.
- Improve Habitat Conservation Planning.
- Ensure an open and sound decision-making procedure.
- Promote volunteerism, hold regulatory authority in reserve, make educational materials available, deal with rule breakers appropriately.
- USDA should consider partnering with conservation NGOs and other federal agencies such as FWS to expand needed delivery of fish and wildlife technical assistance.
- Science professionals must talk and listen to each other.
- Non-profits who have respect/support of local communities/governments can help build grassroots efforts in support of conservation/environmental protection laws.
- Focus programs on local conditions and priorities.
- Clarify conflicting information in the Clean Water Act, specifically Army Corp of Engineer's authority.

Question #3: How can the federal government work with states, tribes, and other public- and private-sector partners to improve science used in environmental protection and conservation?

- Research ozone formation in the wintertime.
- Determine how to measure the effects of energy usage on natural resources and how to mitigate for the impacts.
- Increase research funding and cooperation between tribes and state and federal organizations.
- Develop comprehensive science-based mitigation strategy that clearly indicates how unacceptable wildlife population, habitat, water or air quality declines will be mitigated.
- Develop a publicly accessible database where public can follow monitoring efforts, analysis and subsequent decisions.
- Apply GIS, field data, or other measures to determine if a species habitat is changing, or if the plant or animal is endangered on global scale.
- Establish a system that funds Fish and Wildlife Coop Units and land grant universities to monitor and evaluate the environmental and conservation benefits of various practices in the Farm Bill and other federal programs. Would improve feedback and increase opportunities for adaptive management of these programs while increasing program efficiency and effectiveness in achieving the conservation goals and objectives of these programs.
- Use accurate, impartial science which includes giving full consideration to the expertise of those on the land who are impacted by the decisions.
- ESA should rely on best available science; all decisions comply with Data Quality Act.
- Find ways to quickly change scientific research into local research.
- Believe in the science. Don't change research to conform with preconceived notions.
- Encourage usage of geophysical exploration.
- Research reservoir sediment concerns for free flowing lower Snake River and the flooding risks of the federally controlled lower Snake River dams.
- Use the water quality monitoring developed by Ohio EPA. Monitors water quality based on habitat diversity rather than just chemical analysis.
- Work with USGS to gather flow information for total maximum daily load studies.
- Conduct research to connect conservation practices to the end points of environmental protection.

- Review all science available, not just research from one source.
- Determine if game herds have declined since the reintroduction of wolves.

Question #4: How can the federal government work cooperatively with businesses and landowners to protect the environment and promote conservation?

- Focus on the environment and conservation, *then* work with businesses.
- Encourage businesses to partner with states and others to implement State Wildlife Action Plans and National Fish Habitat Action Plan so that state wildlife agencies and NGOs can leverage additional matching funds.
- Praise should be given to businesses and landowners for the environmental protection that is taking place now.
- Collaborate with non-profits to help deliver an environmental conservation message to the public. It will encourage people to buy locally.
- Partner with universities to bring latest science to farmers, use non-profits to provide technical assistance to farmers.

Question #5: How can the federal government better respect the interests of people with ownership in land, water, and other natural resources?

- Provide funding outside of the 319 grant program to support Ohio's watershed coordinators.
- Give local farming groups the resources to develop a "buy local" message for public to increase public awareness of environmental benefits of farming.
- Develop a healthy respect for the interests of people with ownership in land, water and other natural resources. There should be a "no tolerance" policy for employees who work for a political or personal agenda rather than a scientific perspective.
- Recognize agencies, organizations and partners successfully working together.
- Remember private property rights are fundamental and protected by the U.S. Constitution.
- Uphold and enforce eminent domain.
- Make a distinction between those who willfully destroy natural resources and those who accidentally harm natural resources.

Regional or State Issues

Commenters provided a wide range of regional conservation issues. Issues were provided from 24 different states (there were overlapping issues from neighboring states). Most issues were place-based; i.e., focused on a specific area. Commenters frequently mentioned that they lived close by the area impacted by the issue raised. Comments sometimes included references to specific federal lands (national parks, national forests and wildlife refuges, etc.) located close to where the commenter lived. Many times commenters used references to specific lands as examples to illustrate their comments. These references to specific lands were not included unless numerous commenters mentioned the same topic or unless the issue was not captured elsewhere in the report.

- Alaska
 - Do not allow open bear hunting in McNeil River State Park.
 - Alaskan Inupiat culture cannot hunt for food due to oil development. Culture cannot afford western food costs.
 - Teshekpuk caribou herd most important to the people of North Slope for subsistence

- Rampart Dam project—Yukon Flat exchange for Fish and Wildlife Service refuge land is a bad idea. Doyon Corporation wants to drill for oil and gas on refuge land.
- Oil development at Arctic National Wildlife Refuge will negatively affect whaling
- Retain ownership of lands in FLO 5150 area
- National Park Service needs to fulfill its obligations to Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act.
- Support timber industry development in Alaska.
- Arizona
 - Make tax incentives for conservation easements permanent which were recently legislated for 2006 and 2007 only.
 - Recognize the need for a sliding pricing policy for their lands, depending upon ultimate use.
 - Need help developing a conservation and environmental protection plan for acquisition and preservation of Woodland Lake Park in the White Mountains.
 - Implement Collaborative Forest Restoration Program, which funds capacity building for collaborative forest restoration projects, in Arizona (separately from New Mexico).
 - Fund Southwest Sustainable Forest Partnership, a regional group that listens to economic issues of forest and land management.
- Arkansas
 - Arkansas River Shiner agreement has resulted in no water in the Canadian River.
- California
 - Exclude lands of the Agua Caliente from the revised rule designating critical habitat for Peninsular bighorn sheep.
 - Assist with Delhi Sands Flower Loving Fly conflict.
 - Enhance the Spring-run Chinook and California Coho.
 - Vulcan Mining Company issues.
 - National Estuary Program issues.
 - Santa Rosa Island issues.
 - Northern Spotted Owl population decline due to fire.
 - Red-legged frog population decline needs to be fixed.
 - Western Snowy Plover issues.
 - Klamath River issues.
 - Fremont Dam issues.
 - Lake Berryessa issues.
 - Iron Mountain Mine issue.
 - California Rangeland Resolution issues.
- Colorado
 - Drilling in Colorado not wanted by anyone except oil companies.
 - Oppose opening of oil and gas drilling on Roan Plateau.
 - Stop expansion of DOD's Pinion County military area.
 - Need to manage the vegetation in watersheds in a sustainable manner.
- Florida
 - Maintain course in restoring Everglades.
 - Protect bald eagles, manatees, spotted owl, Mexican gray wolf, Florida Panther, sea turtles, gopher turtles, and Red-Cockaded Woodpecker.
 - Suwannee River Partnership issues.

- National Estuary Program issues.
 - Protect coral reefs.
- Georgia
 - Protect North Atlantic Right Whale by working with local port authority to reduce large vessel speeds.
 - Establish a network of marine protected areas for the US.
- Hawaii
 - Concerned about over development.
 - National Monument is taking land from Ceded Lands Trust.
 - Need a task force to see which environmental regulations are applicable.
 - Federal agencies need to visit more often – things are different in Hawaii.
 - Huge problems with invasive species and endangered species.
 - Import/export laws need revision.
 - Stop the proposed nuclear facility at the airport.
 - Honor Native Hawaiian rights regarding gill nets.
 - Keep current limited commercial fishing on the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands while keeping the monument status.
- Idaho
 - Launch a cooperative conservation project at Grays Lake.
 - Provide leadership to restore declines of Snake River salmon.
 - Repeal the mining law of 1872 that allows the hauling of cyanide and diesel fuel and the creation of a mine on the Boise River.
 - Control wolf populations.
- Indiana
 - Do not allow the opening of a landfill near Madison C.R. 300N and C.R. 300N in Madison County, IN. It will be on the edge of an aquifer.
 - Need funding to control garlic mustard. Garlic mustard is very aggressive and it is destroying wildlife habitat.
- Kansas
 - FEMA flood insurance program in Kansas.
 - Address Missouri River navigation issues
- Maine
 - Land preservation issues are important enough for small town people to vote to increase a tax for land preservation.
 - Need funding to help acquire, remove and modify dams for Penobscot River Restoration Project.
 - Close and relocate the long-polluting Acadia National Park motor pool, gasoline and diesel fuel refueling station and junk yard.
- Massachusetts
 - Knauff Fiberglass—illegally polluting the air for three years and EPA did nothing.
 - Cape Wind project issues
 - Support local agriculture preserve jobs for the region. It supports the local economy; local food is safer; local farm products are more sustainable and energy efficient; open lands and agriculture attracts business.
- Missouri
 - Missouri River Management

- Need federal government to take more proactive stand towards enhancement of fish and wildlife and habitat.
- Original legislation (1944 Flood Control Act – Pick-Sloan) needs updating to address the contemporary uses and needs along the Missouri River.
- Plan and spend recovery money wisely in partnership with landowners in lower basin to have long-term and enhanced flood control.
- Address navigation issues.
- Montana
 - Mike Horse mine cleanup needed in Lincoln.
 - Yellowstone River Conservation District Council.
 - Monitor water quality, look at non-point source pollution and research how to better mitigate these impacts in Flathead Lake.
 - Take an active role in providing resources and funding for Crown of the Continent ecosystem management in Montana.
- Nebraska
 - Address Missouri River navigation issues.
- North Carolina
 - Support Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge.
 - Stop the US Navy's preferred outlying land field (OLF) site in Washington and Beaufort counties on the Albemarle/Pamlico peninsula.
- Ohio
 - Loss of calves to black vultures.
 - Mercury poisoning in fish.
 - In the Darby Accord, federal government should support the public and private investment in conservation by providing funds for the extension of the Big Run Trunk Sewer to the proposed Darby Town Center.
- Oklahoma
 - Reinstate NRCS State Conservationist Darrel Dominick.
 - Need help to implement the voluntary conservation management plan for the protection of the Arkansas River Shiner.
 - Mandatory sighting requirements for future wind facilities in OK and tie those requirements to the production of tax credits.
- Oregon
 - Lost an abundant fishery for the Klamath Tribe.
 - Recovery goals for salmon needed.
 - Support needed for Oregon's Drift Creek to be used to create a new water reservoir impoundment.
 - Klamath River issues.
- Pennsylvania
 - Expedite the toxic waste cleanup of the Occidental Chemical Site (Oxy) at the Schuylkill River to help with flooding exposure.
 - Eliminate multiple sources of radiation discharges into the Schuylkill River.
- South Dakota
 - Pine Ridge Indian Reservation is dealing with the sylvatic plague that has affected the prairie dog colonies, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is still moving forward with giving 5 year leases to cattle operators. Federal conservation agencies need to take a look at how the BIA is managing their trust responsibility.

- Texas
 - Wind farms are a threat to wildlife on Gulf Coast.
 - Wind-powered installations should be subject to NEPA rules and regulations since they are federally funded.
- Virginia
 - Remove sewer crossing of Roanoke River above Wasena park.
 - Roanoke Logperch Recovery Plan issues.
 - Virginia Racer Partnership issues.
 - Blue Ridge Parkway issues.
 - Stop the US Navy's preferred outlying land field (OLF) site in Washington and Beaufort counties on the Albemarle/Pamlico peninsula.
- Washington
 - Pygmy rabbit listing is causing problems.
 - Columbia River Basin issue—need to balance the competing interests. Need a long-term process to address issues. Included Lake Roosevelt issues.
 - Chinook salmon recovery issues.
 - Deal with the beetle infestation in forests.
 - Ponderay National Wildlife Refuge issues.
 - Protect the American wood turtle.
 - Muhlenberg turtle issues.
 - Landslide issues at Two Mouth Creek.
 - Methow Valley fires.
 - Wolf issues.
 - Reconsider opposition to the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail.
- West Virginia
 - Sportsmen want to see management and access to the Monongahela National Forest.
- Wyoming
 - Delist wolves and grizzlies because both species far exceed recovery goals and are reducing moose and elk stock for hunters as well as killing livestock, horses and hunting hounds.
 - Sale of drilling leases and issuing permits in the Wyoming range.
 - Risk to Pinedale's domestic water source in permitting Lakeside Lodge project.
 - Need bighorn sheep research.
 - Jonah and Pinedale Anticline issue.
 - Reintroduction of wolves in Wyoming is a disaster.
 - Protect Jack Marrow Hills.
 - Support Cooperative Sagebrush Initiatives.
- Oregon and California Lands Act
 - Assure that BLM is allowed to fully implement the 1937 Oregon and California lands Act in Oregon.
 - Provide coordination among all of respective landowners and natural resources managing/regulating agencies.

Types of Groups Represented

Following is an alphabetical listing of the types of organizations and individuals who submitted public comment as part of the Listening Session process. This list shows the tremendous diversity of people and organizations that are interested in cooperative conservation. (All types were self-identified. All are listed in the singular, although each type may represent many specific entities).

Abandoned mine reclamation group
Administrator of environmental programs for native groups
Agriculture producer, agriculture industry coalition, agribusiness
Aquatic resources organization
Assistant director of wildlife management for the state
Assistant state conservationist
Associate dean
Author
Biologist
Biology teacher
Birder
Board member
Building industry representative
Canoer
Cellulose recycling company
Chief operating officer
City commissioner
City councilor
City government
City official (mayor, council member, commissioner, water advisor)
Civic club
Clean water organization
Community representative
Concerned citizen
Conservation and environmental education alliance
Conservation director
Contractor/consultant
County government
County official (council member, judge, public health officer)
Cow/calf producer
Dairy farmer
Department of Defense/military
Desert association
Developer - commercial and residential
Director of a youth program
District administrator
Ecological restoration organization
Ecologist
Economic policy specialist
Elected official

Endangered species and habitats organization
Energy company
Energy resources group
Engineer
Environmental consultant
Environmental consulting group
Environmental engineer
Environmental law group
Environmental lawyer
Environmental manager
Environmental organization
Environmental planner
Environmental science teacher
Episcopal bishop
Erosion control contractor
Executive director
Executive vice president
Farm and wildlife supervisor
Farm Bill coordinator
Farmer's organization
Farmer
Federal employee
Federal government agency or bureau
Federal issues policy advocate
Firearms organization
Firefighter
Fishing organization
Forester
Forestry organization
General business interest
Grandparent
High school student "representing the future generation"
Hiker
Homebuilders organization
Horticultural/botany organization
Hotel and innkeeper organization
Hotel manager
Housing organization
Hunter and angler
Hunting organization
Indian tribal representative
Invasive plant management organization
Irrigation interest group
Island fisheries group
Judge
Land conservation organization
Landowner

Landowner Incentive Program Grant Recipient
Law enforcement
Livestock association and producer
Livestock, grazing and stockgrower organization
Logging resource specialist
Member of an endangered species technical advisory committee
Middle school student
National parks friends organization
Native American organization
Native people
Natural resource planner
Natural resources manager
Natural resources director
Naturalist
Non-industrial private forester
Off-highway vehicle organization
Officials from EPA, DNR, FWS, Forest Service, Parks & Wildlife Commission
Oil and gas industry
Outdoorsman
Owner of timberlands
Paper industry
Parent
Pharmaceutical industry
Physician
Plant nursery
Policy specialist
Ports authority
Prairie/rangeland conservation organization
President
Private citizen
Private land owner
Professional guide
Program manager
Public health organization
Public interest environmental lawyer
Public litigation firm
Rancher
Range land management consultant
Realtor
Realty association
Recent university graduate
Recreation coalition
Regional supervisor
Research and monitoring chair
Researcher- tropical, oceanic, agriculture
Resource and land management organization
Retired executive

River conservation organization
Scientist
Senator
Senior research fellow
Senior director
Small business owner
Source water specialist
Sportsman
State government
State natural resources conservation agency
State representative
State shooting association
Storm water management company
Surface water and soil interest group
Teacher
Timber/logging industry
Trade association
Unitarian Universalist minister
University faculty
Veterinarian
Vice-chairman
Volunteer
Waitress
Wastewater treatment
Watershed management organization
Wildlife biologist
Women's farming organization
Wood products industry
Youth program
Youth program director

Discussion

Of the many issues and ranges of opinions that emerged in the listening sessions, perhaps the most telling of all was the range of opinions that participants expressed toward “Cooperative Conservation” itself—that is, Cooperative Conservation as a problem-solving model. These opinions became obvious in either implicit or explicit fashion during the course of thousands of comments, and ranged from embracing, to guarded but hopeful, to skeptical, to cynical, to outright rejection.

These thousands of opinions lead to an understanding of the characteristics that Cooperative Conservation must possess if it is to help the citizenry and the federal government (as the public servant of the citizenry) reach mutually beneficial goals, while satisfying personal, corporate, and government obligations.

*Through their comments, participants in these listening sessions **identified characteristics and qualities associated with Cooperative Conservation.***

The essential qualities of Cooperative Conservation identified from the thousands of comments include:

- Trust,
- Mutual respect in partnerships,
- Personal/corporate responsibility,
- Agency accountability,
- Regulatory rationality,
- Exemplary science,
- Commitment of public policy and finance,
- Coordination and outreach among agencies and partners,
- Commitment to the community's economy, and
- Commitment to the next generation, and the next... .

Practically all those offering comments through the Listening Session process expressed a willingness to engage in Cooperative Conservation. But if even one quality were lacking, many participants expressed concerns about outcomes.

Ready for Action

This report contains a wide range of suggestions for actions that could be taken to move forward with cooperative conservation in response to the Listening Session process. The transcripts of the Listening Sessions contain even more. A few of these suggestions that were mentioned frequently are listed below.

Funding

Funding was the only issue that was supported by nearly everyone who commented on it. Even in difficult economic times, commenters overwhelmingly supported increased funding for conservation activities.

Training

Most commenters requested additional training for federal staff and cooperative conservation partners. Progress also could be achieved through information exchange—letting the public and partners know about the training that currently is ongoing but little known or understood outside the agencies.

Private Lands

Most commenters agreed that federal agencies need to work with private landowners to conserve natural resources—especially in the East where most of the land base is privately held. Progress could be made by:

- providing more funding for voluntary private lands conservation programs,
- identifying voluntary land exchanges with private landowners, and
- increasing technical assistance available from federal agency staff.

Public Lands

On public lands, there was support for land exchanges to consolidate public lands, so long as transfers received adequate review, assessment and public discussion. There also was broad support for addressing the maintenance backlog on public lands of all types.

Environmental laws

Most commenters recognized the need for environmental laws as a component of cooperative conservation, but many were concerned about impacts of the laws on the ground. Many stated the need to balance conservation and economic growth. Some of the negativity surrounding environmental laws could be minimized if the regulatory process were streamlined by:

- better defining the process, responsibilities, roles and timelines,
- making the process open and transparent,
- focusing on environmental protection rather than paperwork requirements, and
- Removing duplicative federal and state permit requirements.

Farm Bill

Most comments on the Farm Bill recognized that it has been a positive force for conservation in the U.S. and enjoys wide popularity within the agricultural and conservation communities. This success could be continued/expanded through reauthorization of all conservation titles, continued/expanded funding, and a careful review of other suggestions for improvements.

“Thank You for the opportunity to be heard”

Most Listening Session participants closed their comments by thanking the “guest listeners” for the opportunity to be heard. It was obvious to many that this “thank you” was more than a gratuitous final gesture—but rather an appreciation that, regardless of where speakers and listeners stood on the issues at hand—the process of one person speaking to another, expressing their hopes, concerns, bad experiences, good experiences, and recommendations for actions—is the purest, most direct, and most gratifying form of governance.

Appendix A. Agency representatives attending each Listening Session.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Principals</u>
August 9, 2006	Spokane, WA	Dirk Kempthorne, Secretary, DOI Dale Hall, Director, USFWS Stephen Johnson, Administrator, EPA Ron Kreizenbeck, Acting Regional Administrator, EPA Michael Bogert, Counselor to the Secretary, DOI
August 14, 2006	Roanoke, VA	Lynn Scarlett, Deputy Secretary, DOI Donald Welsh, Regional Administrator, EPA David Tenny, Deputy Under Secretary, USDA
August 14, 2006	Helena, MT	Robbie Roberts, Region 8 Administrator, EPA Merlyn Carlson, Deputy Under Secretary, USDA
August 21, 2006	Columbus, OH	Mark Rey, Under Secretary, USDA Brian Waidmann, Chief of Staff, DOI Ben Grumbles, Assistant Administrator for Water Programs, EPA
August 22, 2006	Redmond, OR	Dirk Kempthorne, Secretary, DOI Rick Otis, Deputy Associate Administrator, EPA Mark Rey, Under Secretary, USDA Bob Lohn, Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA Congressman Greg Walden Mark Limbaugh, Assistant Secretary, DOI
August 24, 2006	Omaha, NE	Dale Hall, Director, USFWS
August 26, 2006	Muncie, IN	Lynn Scarlett, Deputy Secretary, DOI Dale Hall, Director, USFWS
August 28, 2006	Fairbanks, AK	Dirk Kempthorne, Secretary, DOI Dale Hall, Director, USFWS Ron Kreizenbeck, Acting Regional Administrator, EPA Tim Keeney, Deputy Assistant Secretary, NOAA
August 29, 2006	Jefferson City, MO	David Tenny, Deputy Under Secretary, USDA Jim Gulliford, Assistant Administrator, EPA
August 30, 2006	Enid, OK	David Tenny, Deputy Under Secretary of Natural Resources and Environment, USDA Benjamin Tuggle, Southwest Regional Director, USFWS Richard Greene, Region 6 Administrator, EPA

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Principals</u>
September 5, 2006	Corpus Christi, TX	David Sampson, Deputy Secretary, DOC Joy Nicolopolus, Texas State Administrator, USFWS Deborah Epperson, Studies Plan Coordinator Unit Supervisor, Gulf of Mexico Region, Minerals Management Services, DOI Lee Fuiman, Director, Marine Science Institute, University of Texas; Manager, Mission Aransas National Estuary and Research Reserve Program, USFWS
September 7, 2006	Honolulu, HI	Peter Young, Chairman, Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources Governor Lingle Jim Connaughton, Chairman, President's Council on Environmental Quality
September 12, 2006	Snowflake, AZ	Mark Rey, Under Secretary, USDA Marcus Peacock, Deputy Administrator, EPA Dale Hall, Director, USFWS
September 13, 2006	Redding, CA	Mark Rey, Under Secretary, USDA Steve Thompson, California/Nevada Regional Director, USFWS Scott Rayder, Chief of Staff, NOAA Wayne Nastri, Pacific Southwest Regional Administrator, EPA
September 15, 2006	Colorado Springs, CO	Mark Rey, Under Secretary, USDA Julie Jacobson, Deputy Assistant Secretary, DOI
September 15, 2006	Miami, FL	Carlos M. Gutierrez, Secretary, DOC Otis Brown, University of Miami - Rosenstiel School Sam Hamilton, Southeast Regional Director, USFWS Roy Crabtree, Southeast Regional Administrator, NOAA Daniel Basta, Director, National Marine Sanctuary Program, NOAA Bob Ballard, Deputy Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection Kenneth Haddad, Executive Director, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
September 18, 2006	Pottstown, PA	Stephen Johnson, Administrator , EPA Representative Jim Gerlach Marvin Moriarty, Regional Director, USFWS Howard Neukrug, P.E., Director, Office of Watersheds, City of Philadelphia Water Department Lyn O'Hare, Assistant Manager, Berks County Conservation District
September 19, 2006	Pinedale, WY	Johnnie Burton, Acting Assistant Secretary, Lands and Mineral Management, DOI Robbie Roberts, Region 8 Administrator, EPA

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Principals</u>
September 20, 2006	Brewer, ME	Dirk Kempthorne, Secretary, DOI James Walpole, General Counsel, NOAA Marvin Moriarty, Northeast Regional Director, USFWS
September 21, 2006	Brunswick, GA	Dale Hall, Director, USFWS Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, Administrator, NOAA
September 25, 2006	Orlando, FL	Governor Jeb Bush Dirk Kempthorne, Secretary, DOI Steven Johnson, Administrator, EPA
September 27, 2006	Waco, TX	David Verhey, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, DOI Alex Beehler, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Environment, Safety and Occupational Health) Mayor Richard Green, Region 6 Administrator, EPA Major General James Simmons, Deputy Commander 3rd Corps Fort Hood Lisa Woods, Deputy Commissioner, Texas Agriculture Commission
September 28, 2006	San Bernardino, CA	Dirk Kempthorne, Secretary, DOI Colonel John McMahan, Commander, South Pacific Division, US Army Corps of Engineers Wayne Nastri, Regional Administrator, EPA Rodney McInnis, Southwest Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
September 29, 2006	Northampton, MA	Mark Rey, Under Secretary, USDA Marvin Moriarty, Northeast Regional Director, USFWS
October 9, 2006	Boise, ID	Dirk Kempthorne, Secretary, DOI Governor James Risch Stephen Allred, Lands and Mineral Management, DOI Senator Larry Craig Senator Mike Crapo Congressman Mike Simpson Bob Lohn, Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA

Agency Abbreviation Key:

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC); U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI); U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)